

# CZAR'S CRACK REGIMENT FOLLOWS HISTORIC EXAMPLE OF FAVORED TROOPS WHO HAVE FORCED THEIR COMMANDERS TO BREAK THEIR SWORDS.

**H**ISTORY is repeating itself in Russia these days. In fact, history has so formed the habit of

vain repetition, saying over and over again in various languages and periods, what she has been saying since the beginning of time, that it is rare indeed that she has anything new to say. Now it is the Preobrajensky regiment that has fallen the Czar of Russia in an emergency. More than a century ago it was the French Guard which killed Louis XVI in an emergency. And centuries and centuries before that—during the first few centuries of the Christian era, in fact—it was the Praetorian cohort, some portion or the whole of it, which made and unmade Roman Emperors. The lesson seems to be that trusted troops are never trustworthy, that in periods of upheaval, the imperial body-guard is always the first to yield to the whisperings of treason, the first to show disloyalty, the first to betray the ruler who would, and has, staked his life on their good faith.

According to trustworthy information the Emperor Nicholas recently summoned the Preobrajensky regiment before the imperial palace at Peterhof, and in a sarcastic address expressed his regret at their evident disloyalty in declaring sympathy with the radical program of the duma. He ended by saying that he would never again wear the uniform of the regiment. As a matter of fact, he is, according to Burton Holmes, only entitled to wear the uniform of one of its first lieutenants. The lecturer in describing the great annual review of the first of May, says:

"Among the first to march stiffly past their imperial commander are the men of the illustrious regiment to which the Czar himself belongs. Even as Czar he still retains the lowly rank of first lieutenant, for he had risen no higher in the military grade when called upon to mount the throne. He remains, therefore, a lieutenant in this Preobrajensky regiment—and incidentally ex-officio commander-in-chief of all the armies of all the Russias.

This Preobrajensky regiment has been the Czar's favorite of all those that go to make up the imperial guard. It has been the first battalion, and the discovery of its disaffection was a crushing blow to the Emperor. He has ordered its name to be stricken from the rolls of the Imperial Guards. In addition the soldiers and officers of the battalion have been deprived forever of the special rights enjoyed by guardsmen. Hereafter the battalion will be designated "The Special Infantry Battalion."

—Twas ever thus.

In France, one hundred and fourteen years ago next month, the national guard, who should have protected their king with their lives, refused to fire on the people when a mob under the leadership of Danton attacked the Tuilleries. To be sure, they labored under the disadvantage of being without a leader, or Mandat, their commandant, had been summoned before the insurrectionists, and because he would not yield to their demands killed as he left the hall. Possibly had he been at their head the guard might have behaved differently. Certainly he would have staked his life on their loyalty and courage.

As it was it was the Swiss Guard who gave a splendid exhibition of stanchness. A mere band of hirelings they shed their blood unquestioning for a king who was not theirs, to whom they owed no fealty, and lay down their lives unhesitatingly for the abstract duty of doing what they were paid to do. They, to use a modern phrase, "made good"—aye, even magnificently good.

Further back in the beginning of the Christian era, there were the Praetorian Cohorts, the bodyguard of the Roman emperors. They were a picked body of troops who, in the time of the republic, had formed the guard of a general in command of an army. The Latin word for general was "praetor," the general's quarters in camp were the "praetorium"—hence the name Praetorian Guards. The emperor was like the Czar today, commander-in-chief. His headquarters were in Rome, and one of the first acts of the first emperor was the organization of this guard.

The command of the Praetorians rested legally and nominally, with the emperor, but it was practically in the hands of one or more colonels or praefects. They were divided into cohorts or regiments of 1,000 men each, horse and foot. In the time of Augustus there were nine of these regiments, three being quar-

tered in Rome, the remainder in neighboring cities. Under Tiberius, Syanus collected them into a permanent fortified camp outside the N-

ination Gate of Rome. Their numbers varied; sometimes there were ten cohorts, sometimes twelve, sometimes sixteen.

They were favorite troops, with a shorter term of service, and nominally double, though in reality much more than double, the pay of any others. They had all sorts of special privileges and exemptions, and from the time of Claudius, they "controlled the elections," until they were suppressed by Constantine in 312. It was usual for the emperors on their succession to the throne to purchase the favor of

their body guards with liberal donations—and they remained emperor, only so long as the Praetorians chose to let them.

In 192 they murdered the Emperor Pertinax, who seems to have been an unusually fine specimen of the Roman emperor, and put the empire up at auction, knocking it down to the highest bidder, who happened to be Julius Didianus. Pertinax had ruled for eighty-six days, but his successor was only able to hold down the job for two months, when the Praetorians made one of their own praefects, Severus, emperor. He promptly showed the wisdom of the selection by disbanding the Praetorians; though he reorganized them ere long on a more magnificent scale.

To come down to modern times—times that are still within the memory of living men—it is not quite fifty years since history was telling the same tale in India, writing into her records in letters of blood some gruesome chapters under the headings of "The Great Mutiny." It is to be hoped that the chapters now writing in Russia will not be such terrible reading as those were. But always and always it seems to be the favorite regiments that are the first to mutiny. In the Sepoy war it was the native troops whose British officers trusted them most implicitly who were the first to betray that faith.

Some of the greatest tragedies of that great tragedy were due to the blind and fond credulity of old Bengal officers as to the stanchness of their men. There was Colonel Smith of the Tenth Native Infantry, stationed at Futteghur, seventy miles from Cawnpore. He cherished a piously confident belief in the oyalty of his Sepoys. But they mutinied and of the little garrison of thirty fighting men and sixty women and children only one boatload succeeded in reaching Cawnpore to eventually perish amid the horrors of that slaughter-house.

There was Colonel Spottiswoode, of the Fifty-fifth Native Infantry, stationed at Mardian. He blew out his brains in grief and despair when he saw his faithful Sepoys in open revolt. His regiment fired on its officers and marched off to the hills with its regimental colors. Nicholson followed and overtook it, killed 150 of the men, captured another 150, and executed forty of them by blowing them from his guns—a picturesque and dramatic form of execution original to the Sepoy mutiny. The rest crossed the border and were hunted down by the hill tribes. Some fell into the hands of Mohomedan fanatics and were "converted" by the arguments of whip or sword, or were sold as slaves. They found mutiny a bitter experience and probably wished they'd been good. There are all sorts of legends connected with the wanderings of this regiment, of which Kipling has told graphically in his story of "The Lost Legion."

Then there was Colonel Simpson in command of the Fifth Native Infantry at Allahabad. He had the most enthusiastic faith in his men—regarded them as a regiment of dusky-skinned Sir Gallahads, each one as faithful as Milton's Abdiel.

On the evening of June 6, 1857, Colonel Simpson read to his cherished Sepoys the formal thanks of the governor general for their virtuous offer to go out and fight the wicked mutineers at Delhi. He added on his own account a glowing eulogy of their loyalty. The Sepoys cheered him to the echo, and the gallant colonel adjourned to the mess room, there to discuss with his fellow-officers the great comfort to be derived from the much enduring fidelity of their men.

Within four hours of being thanked by Lord Canning, and praised by Colonel Simpson, the faithful Sepoys of the Sixth Native Infantry had murdered seventeen officers and all the women and children of English blood they could capture and were in full march for Delhi. Simpson and his officers ran to the parade ground to "expostulate" with their men. Five officers were immediately shot down. Colonel Simpson was beginning to address a new series of compliments to his "faithful Sepoys," but they turned their muskets on him and interrupted his eloquence with a volley. By some miracle he escaped and galloped off to the fort. He had to ride past the mess house and the mess guard turned out and took pot shots at him as he rode. He reached the gate of the fort with a dying horse, a wounded arm and an entirely new theory of Sepoy loyalty.

These are only a few of the many

(Continued on Page 4)



The Czar of Russia  
IN THE UNIFORM OF THE  
PREOBRAJENSKY REGIMENT